



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Managing California's Working Lands

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

801 K STREET • MS 24-07 • SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814

PHONE 916 / 323-1886 • FAX 916 / 323-1887 • TDD 916 / 324-2555 • WEB SITE conservation.ca.gov

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Contact:

Ed Wilson
Don Drysdale

SAN DIEGO COUNTY QUARRY CLAIMS STATE MINE RECLAMATION AWARD

SACRAMENTO – A San Diego County quarry operator has been recognized by the state for its efforts to restore the land following the completion of mining. The California Department of Conservation's Office of Mine Reclamation and the State Mining and Geology Board have presented Hanson Aggregates Pacific Southwest, Inc. with the annual "Excellence in Reclamation" award for its Quarry Creek project.

"One of the key elements of the state's mining law is reclamation – that is, returning the land that has been disturbed for mining to a natural or useful condition," Department of Conservation Director Mark Nechodom said. "Mining is important to our economy and way of life. By necessity, it alters the environment. However, this project is proof that mining doesn't have to leave permanent scars on the land. Reclamation helps to maintain water and air quality, and minimizes flooding, erosion and damage to wildlife and aquatic habitats."

Added State Mining and Geology Board Executive Officer Stephen Testa: "We're pleased to extend this award to Hanson for this thorough, environmentally sensitive, and aesthetically pleasing reclamation effort."

Quarry Creek -- also known as the former South Coast Materials Quarry -- is located on 104 acres, crossing the jurisdictions of the cities of Oceanside and Carlsbad. Mining began at the site in 1961. It was taken over by Hanson in 1991 and mined until 1995, when the resources were depleted. Concrete and asphalt batching operations continued until recently.

The operation's reclamation plan was revised a couple of times, as recently as 2010 to retain the natural alignment of Buena Vista Creek and enhance the wetland and riparian habitats. Due to increased flows from urbanization of the watershed, a number of steps had to be instituted for stormwater management. The creek corridor has been replanted with native riparian species and climate-appropriate shrubs were planted on the slopes to help prevent erosion. A conservation easement was put in place to create and manage an Open Space Preserve along the creek and preserve access to El Salto Falls, a sacred site to the local Native Americans. Numerous mitigation measures were also adopted to deal with the site's biological resources, sensitive species and habitats.

An additional 58 acres of the former quarry was reclaimed and developed into a shopping center in 2001. A portion of the site remains to be developed for housing.

“This example of a successful multi-use reclamation project involved the participation of a variety of stakeholders, including federal, state, and local government agencies, environmental groups, Native Americans, and concerned citizens,” noted James Pompy, head of the Office of Mine Reclamation.

Hanson is one of the largest construction materials companies in North America. Hanson companies produce cement, aggregates (crushed rock, sand and gravel), ready mixed concrete, asphalt and a range of other building materials.

“We are very proud of what we have achieved by working closely with our neighbors and other stakeholders on this project,” said Marvin E. Howell of Hanson. “We want to thank the Department of Conservation and State Mining and Geology Board for this award. We are grateful for this recognition and their thoughtful input, which helped to make this a project we can all take pride in.”

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